



## Engineering Department

July 23, 2020

Abby M. Korte  
Jacobs Engineering Group Inc.  
7300 Metro Blvd Stu 400  
Minneapolis, MN 55439

Re: BNSF Bismarck Bridge Alternatives

Dear Ms. Korte,

On behalf of the City of Bismarck, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed alternatives associated with the BNSF Bridge replacement project across the Missouri River between Bismarck and Mandan, North Dakota. The City of Bismarck operates three 1 MG buried water storage tanks and associated piping known as the West End Reservoirs north of the existing BNSF line on the Bismarck side of the Missouri River. The City's infrastructure is vitally important to our water distribution network and all alternatives under consideration by BNSF should avoid impacting this facility.

The City would not define impact as acquisition of right of way or slope easement within the boundary of the City's parcel necessarily but rather as placing or removing fill from the hillside between the BNSF track and the City's facility in a way that creates an unsafe or unstable slope by common geotechnical standards. The City would request BNSF perform appropriate geotechnical analyses to confirm that the combination of any proposed sloping and/or retaining walls between the West End Reservoirs and the BNSF track would result in a safe and stable slope able to support the facility using a standard of care and safety factor requisite to the vital importance of this facility to our community.

The exhibits provided to the City dated 6/24/20 of the APE and proposed construction limits of the 20', 42.5' and 92.5' offset alignments using only grading on the backfill and without the usage of any retaining walls show grading within City's property. The limits of the 42.5' and 92.5' offset alignments would need to be revised as discussed in the previous paragraph to limit the APE and pull the construction limits closer to the BNSF track. The City cannot provide any guidance as to a distance from the BNSF track that we can support or specific recommendations on the type or size of retaining walls or

**Gabriel J. Schell, PE, City Engineer**

Phone: 701-355-1505 • TDD: 711 • Fax: 701-222-6593 • 221 N. Fifth St. • PO Box 5503 • Bismarck, ND 58506-5503  
Email: bisengd@bismarcknd.gov • www.bismarcknd.gov

slope treatments as that would be governed by the geotechnical analysis recommended to be performed.

Please note also that the 20' offset alignment shows the construction limits in this area as tying down close to the existing BNSF track without any work proposed on the existing backslope between the track and the West End Reservoir. There is a documented erosion occurring within the BNSF right of way that has been previously disclosed to BNSF. This is shown below in the 2020 aerial photo with the area circled in red. BNSF had previously indicated that remediation of this issue would be incorporated into any of the alternatives including the no build alternative. Please confirm this is still the case and if so, the construction limits of the 20' offset alignment should include this area as being disturbed in some manner.



Source: City of Bismarck GIS

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment and please contact me if you have any additional questions or seek clarification or collaboration on any of the previously mentioned items above.

Sincerely,

Gabe Schell, PE  
City Engineer